



Local Writer on International Stage

Stockton writer and teacher Nell Jones has been invited to the Ubud Writer's and Reader's Festival in Bali in October this year.

Nell, who self-published her biographical work *The Lost Sister of Groningen* last year, described to me the six years of research, and hard work that the work involved. Author of plays and stories she decided to take three months out of normal living to write the book in the magical

setting of Florence.

I interviewed Nell in her home in Stockton. Her house is pretty much what I would expect a writer's house to be. Eclectic. With part of herself in the collections of paintings, books, music. The house is warm and comfortable on a cool winter's day. Nell walked me through the house and pointed to the paintings

by her father, the photographs of her daughter, where Nell sat at a desk to type out her writing. She posed for this photo in the back yard. The yard is eclectic also. From the brick dunny to the pile of branches waiting to be mulched, it spoke of a mind busily interested in both how things work and the natural order of things. Nell's home is both a sanctuary

and a gallery. I realise that I feel comfortable with Nell. She is authentic.

The book is about her mother, Anneke, who by strength of character rose from terrible circumstances of her birth and childhood in the Netherlands in World War 2 and the decade after. I keep trying to read snatches of her book while we talk. I manage to read